

## **IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM UPDATE**

### **April 2015**

This month's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) report provides an update on the activities of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) ILRP through April 2015, as provided by the Regional Water Board April 16-17, 2015 Executive Officer report. Future monthly reports alternately present the status of the Central Valley Regional Water Board ILRP for one month, and the Regional Water Board ILRPs the alternate month. Current and past ILRP program monthly reports can be found on the [State Water Board Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program](#) website.

### **STATE WATER BOARD**

On April 6, 2015, Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) staff participated in a meeting with the Farm Food Safety Conservation Network (FFSCN) Steering Committee to discuss revisions to the current goals and objectives of the FFSCN. It was decided that a higher grower and food safety auditor presence is needed as the FFSCN evolves. Also discussed was the development of a FFSCN poster to be presented at the Western States Food Safety Symposium being held in May 2015.

On April 6, 2015, ILRP and CalRecycle staff met to discuss a proposed resource recovery project that will convert organic solid waste to biochar and other reusable products through a pyrolysis process. The proposed project would be developed as a private/public partnership between a contractor and a county planning agency located in the Central Valley Region.

On April 8, 2015, ILRP and other Division of Water Quality (DWQ) staff met with Pesticide Advisors and Certified Crop Advisors to discuss development of a more formal partnership to address nutrient management plan development and implementation. The roles and responsibilities of each agency will be discussed throughout the next year.

On April 9, 2015, ILRP staff met with CalRecycle to discuss organic waste land application issues related to the proposed CalRecycle regulations and the proposed Water Board Compost General Order.

On April 13, 2015, ILRP staff participated in a conference call with California Bioresources Alliance (CBA) planning committee to plan for the CBA Annual Symposium to be held at UC Davis in the fall.

On April 16, 2015, ILRP staff participated in a Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) State Technical Advisory Group meeting to go over the current Farm Bill allocations and assess priority projects to advance in the project selection process.

On April 20, 2015, ILRP staff met with NRCS staff regarding the proposed San Benito resource recovery project and the potential impacts the project may have. The Water Board and NRCS are interested in the land application protocol that the project proposes to implement.

On April 22, 2015, ILRP staff met with CalRecycle, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), and East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) staff to discuss the use of blood and other mammalian tissue as an organic feedstock at Publicly Owned Treatment Works Wastewater Treatment Plants.

On April 23, 2015, ILRP staff participated in the NRCS Technical Advisory Committee to review and comment on several conservation practice standards, including nutrient management plans.

On April 29 and 30, 2015, ILRP staff participated in the quarterly Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program Roundtable held in San Luis Obispo (i.e. Central Coast Regional Water Board office).

## **CENTRAL VALLEY REGION**

### **Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) Development:**

#### *Grassland Bypass Project/Grassland Drainage Area WDRs*

On February 6, 2015, a public workshop was held on the draft administrative waste discharge requirements for Growers in the Grassland Drainage Area. The Central Valley Water Board staff presentation included comments received from the public on the posted draft WDRs.

On March 11, 2015, Central Valley Water Board staff (Regional Water Board staff) met with representatives for the Grassland Drainage Area farmers to discuss corrections and clarifications for the draft WDRs/MRP for the Grassland Bypass Project and the Grassland Drainage Area. Representatives of the US Bureau of Reclamation participated by conference line. Tentative draft Orders for the Grassland Bypass Project and the Grassland Drainage Area are expected to be posted before the end of March for a 45-day public comment period.

#### *Western Tulare Lake Basin WDRs*

During the February 5, 2015 board meeting, Regional Water Board staff presented proposed revisions to Waste Discharge Requirements General Order R5-2014-0001 for Growers within the Western Tulare Lake Basin Area that are Members of a Third-Party Group (WTLBA General Order). The proposed revisions to the WTLBA General Order modified the existing time schedule for submission of the Farm Evaluations and Nitrogen Management Plans. The Order was adopted as proposed.

### **Nitrogen Management Plan Template:**

On December 23, 2015, the final Nitrogen Management Plan Template (including instructions) was issued to the Agricultural Water Quality Coalitions. Third-party representatives have distributed the template to coalition members and provided training to growers on filling out the template. Regional Water Board staff have participated in the training for growers as well as training for certified crop advisors (CCAs). Members will use the template to fulfill the applicable requirements of the General Order governing discharge from irrigated lands. The [template and instructions](#) are available on the Region 5 website.

### **Compliance, Outreach, & Enforcement:**

#### *East San Joaquin Agricultural Parcel Inspections*

In January and February 2015, Regional Water Board staff inspected 98 parcels in the East San Joaquin River Watershed. The purpose of these inspections is to determine if the parcels are commercial irrigated lands that require coverage under an Irrigated Lands General Order. Data gathered during these inspections will be used to focus and prioritize the issuance of 13260 directives to commercial irrigated lands that are not covered by the applicable Irrigated Lands General Order.

#### *Sacramento Valley Agricultural Parcel Inspections*

In February and March 2015, Regional Water Board staff inspected 138 parcels in the Sacramento Valley Watershed. The purpose of these inspections is to determine if the parcels are commercial irrigated lands that require coverage under an Irrigated Lands General Order. Data gathered during these inspections will be used to focus and prioritize the issuance of 13260 directives to commercial irrigated lands that are not covered by the applicable Irrigated Lands General Order.

#### *San Joaquin County & Delta Agricultural Parcel Inspections*

In January and March 2015, Regional Water Board staff inspected 372 parcels in the San Joaquin County & Delta Water Quality Coalition area. The purpose of these inspections is to determine if the parcels are commercial irrigated lands that require coverage under an Irrigated Lands General Order. Data gathered during these inspections will be used to focus and prioritize the issuance of 13260 directives to commercial irrigated lands that are not covered by the applicable Irrigated Lands General Order.

#### *Tulare Lake Basin Agricultural Parcel Inspections*

In January and February 2015, Regional Water Board staff inspected 50 parcels in the Kings River Watershed Coalition Authority area, 120 parcels in the Kern River Watershed Coalition Authority area, 91 parcels in the Tule Basin Water Quality Coalition area and 92 parcels in the Kaweah Basin Water Quality Association area. Information gathered during the inspections was used to determine which parcels require coverage under the applicable Tulare Lake Basin General Order.

### East San Joaquin Water Code Section 13260 Directives

In January 2015, Regional Water Board staff issued 122 Directives to growers in the East San Joaquin Watershed. These directives were sent based on staff inspections that confirmed the presence of irrigated agricultural operations. The recipients are required to submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) obtain either group or individual regulatory coverage within 15 days of receipt of the Directive.

### Tulare Lake Basin Water Code section 13260 Directives

In January and February 2015, Regional Water Board staff issued 48 Directives to growers in the Tule Basin Water Quality Coalition area, 36 Directives to growers in the Kern River Watershed Coalition Authority area, 32 Directives to growers in the Kings River Watershed Coalition area and 48 Directives to growers in the Kaweah Basin Water Quality Association area. These directives were sent based on staff inspections which confirmed the presence of irrigated agricultural operations. The recipients are required to submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) obtain either group or individual regulatory coverage within 15 days of receipt of the Directive.

### West San Joaquin Water Code Section 13260 Directives

In March 2015, Regional Water Board staff issued 40 Directives to growers in the Western San Joaquin River Watershed. These directives were sent based on staff inspections that confirmed the presence of irrigated agricultural operations. The recipients are required to submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) obtain either group or individual regulatory coverage within 15 days of receipt of the Directive.

### Tulare Lake Basin Notices of Violation for Failure to respond to a Water Code section 13260 Directive

In January and February 2015, Regional Water Board staff mailed 76 Notices of Violation (NOVs) to landowners who failed to respond to a 13260 Directive. These owners of commercial irrigated lands (as determined by staff inspection) were previously mailed directives that required the recipients to submit proof of coalition membership or a Notice of Intent to get regulatory coverage. The NOVs give the recipients 15 days to respond or face administrative civil liability.

### Clear Lake Area Sediment Discharge Investigation

On February 6, 2015, Regional Water Board staff investigated a complaint of sediment discharges from a vacant property on High Valley Road, northeast of Clear Lake. Regional Water Board staff's investigation, which occurred during a rain event, found significant discharges of sediment and highly turbid storm water from the property. The sediment-laden storm water ran into Schindler Creek, which discharges to Clear Lake. The cause of the sediment appeared to be disturbed earth and vegetation removed by dirt biking-type recreational off-road activities. Regional Water Board staff will work with the landowner and use progressive enforcement as needed to mitigate the sediment discharges.

## **Coalitions:**

### *California Rice Commission Coalition*

On February 10, 2015, the Farm Evaluation Template submitted by the California Rice Commission was approved by the Executive Officer. The Farm Evaluation template was posted for public comment on January 9, 2015. No comments were received. Rice growers in the Sacramento Valley will submit the Farm Evaluation using a web-based information system to the California Rice Commission.

### *Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition (SVWQC)*

On January 12, 2015, the final 2015 Monitoring Plan Update Approval and Regional Water Board staff memo was mailed to the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition. On February 11, 2015, Regional Water Board staff held a Quarterly Management Plan Meeting with the Coalition to discuss the status of submitted management plan completion requests; progress of the Coalition's management plans; the 2015 Goose Lake monitoring schedule; and staff tours of the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition subwatersheds. Due to time constraints, the meeting was continued to a telephone conference on February 20, 2015 to discuss the 2016 monitoring of copper in the Placer-Nevada-South Sutter-North Sacramento subwatershed; components for the Comprehensive Surface Water Management Plan and Annual Management Plan Status Update Report; and Coalition compliance time schedules.

On February 20, 2015, a letter was sent to the Coalition to describe the requirement of third-party groups to prepare and submit a "Crop Nitrogen Knowledge Gap Study Plan." Requirements include a detailed description of the Technical Work Group they plan to convene; guidance documents used in the preparation of the nitrogen management plan which will be provided to growers and certifiers; and a description of the state of knowledge and the knowledge gaps associated with nitrogen uptake and removal.

On February 24, 2015, SVWQC submitted a letter to the Central Valley Water Board to request an extension of the deadline to submit Report Component No. 20 – Summary of Management Practice Information for the first Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). A 90-day extension from May 1, 2015 to August 1, 2015 is being sought by the Coalition.

On February 25, 2015, SVWQC submitted an addendum to the SVWQC Monitoring Plan Update for the 2015 monitoring year (October 2014 – September 2015). The addendum provides the assessment monitoring plan for the Goose Lake subwatershed which was not specified previously in the monitoring update for 2015.

### *East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition (ESJWQC)*

On January 5, 2015, the Executive Officer approved the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition Monitoring Plan Update (MPU) for the 2015 water year. Regional Water Board staff also recommends future MPU reports should consider all constituents as part of management plan monitoring at Represented Sites.

On January 20, 2015, the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition requests revisions to the Order, including change the northern boundary of the Coalition area,

provide a one-year extension for certification of Nitrogen Management Plans and clarify expectations for grower implementation of Nitrogen Management Plans.

On January 22, 2015, the Executive Officer issued a letter that no further response is required by the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition. Staff confirmed that Attachment B of the Groundwater Quality Assessment Report addressed all requirements in the conditional approval letter and included updates to future deliverables.

On January 28, 2015, Regional Water Board staff participated in a project demonstration organized by Carden Water Systems at Panoche Water District in Firebaugh, CA. The demonstration featured pre-treatment and Reverse Osmosis water purification systems.

On February 2, 2015, Regional Water Board staff and East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition representatives discussed the Surface Water Quality Management Plan (SQMP), Delta Regional Monitoring Plan and Sediment Discharge and Erosion Assessment Report (SDEAR). The Coalition resubmitted the SQMP according to staff comments on 10 March. Staff is currently reviewing the document.

On February 6, 2015, the tentative revised Order was released for public review and one additional change was released with the proposed revisions on February 13, 2015, one comment was received by March 13, 2015 deadline, and Regional Water Board staff prepared agenda items for the Board meeting.

On February 19, 2015, the Executive Officer issued requirements for a coalition crop nitrogen knowledge gap study plan. Requirements included: a description of the Technical Advisory Work Group by March 16, 2015; an NMP guidance document for growers and certifiers by December 18, 2015; a Crop Nitrogen Knowledge Gap Study Plan by December 18, 2015.

On February 23, 2015, the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition submitted the Comprehensive Groundwater Quality Management Plan (GQMP). Regional Water Board staff is currently reviewing the proposed monitoring plan for compliance with the requirements of the Order.

On March 13, 2015, staff and East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition representatives discussed the elements of the SDEAR, including the criteria to map the Sediment Discharge Erosion Control Plan. Coalition representatives agreed to revise the criteria and develop a process to identify potential dischargers.

#### *San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition (SJCDWQC)*

On January 5, 2015, the Executive Officer approved the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition's Monitoring Plan Update for the 2015 water year. As part of the approval, the East Orwood Tract Drain site exchange will need to be reflected in a new MPU Amendments summary table. The Coalition provided the

revision on January 13, 2015.

On January 13, 2015, the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition provided revisions to the Monitoring Plan Update in accordance with the January 5, 2015 approval.

On January 16, 2015, the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition requests revisions to the Order, including an extension to the Nitrogen Management Plan certification date, and the Coalition's southern boundary.

On February 4, 2015, Regional Water Board staff issued a Notice of Public Hearing concerning revisions to the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition Order. No comments were received by the end of the 30-day deadline.

On February 19, 2015, the Executive Officer issued requirements for a coalition crop nitrogen knowledge gap study plan. Requirements included: a description of the Technical Advisory Work Group by March 15, 2015; a NMP guidance document for growers and certifiers by December 18, 2015; a Crop Nitrogen Knowledge Gap Study Plan by December 18, 2015.

On February 25, 2018, the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition provided concepts for participation in the Delta Regional Monitoring Program. Meetings were held with the Coalition discussing the concepts.

*Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition (WSJRWC)*

On January 15, 2015, Regional Water Board staff held a meeting with WSJRWC to discuss the Nitrogen Management Plan timeline requirements. The Coalition submitted their Monitoring Plan Update for the period of March 2015 through February 2017.

On January 28, 2015, Regional Water Board staff participated in a project demonstration organized by Carden Water Systems at Panoche Water District in Firebaugh, CA. The demonstration featured a pre-treatment and Reverse Osmosis water purification system intended to treat subsurface drainage from agricultural fields in the Panoche Water District.

On January 30, 2015, Regional Water Board staff held a meeting with the Coalition to discuss the Monitoring Plan Update. The Coalition has not yet provided the revised Monitoring and Reporting Program Plan.

On February 9, 2015, Regional Water Board staff held a meeting with the Coalition to discuss the timelines for Groundwater Assessment Report (GAR) and Sediment Discharge and Erosion Assessment Report (SDEAR) along with Comprehensive Groundwater/Surface Water Quality Management Plan. The GAR and SDEAR are due by March 17, 2015. Methodologies being used by the Coalition/consultants in their GAR to delineate the High and Low Vulnerability Areas were also discussed.

On February 12, 2015, Regional Water Board staff issued a Notice of Public Hearing concerning revisions to the Western San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition Order (R5-2014-0002). No comments were received by the end of the 30-day deadline.

On February 17, 2015, the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition provided concepts for participation in the Delta Regional Monitoring Program. Meetings were held with the Coalition discussing the concepts.

On February 23, 2015, Regional Water Board staff visited the UC Davis Research Farm and held a meeting with the Research Farm managers regarding the Nitrogen Management Plan requirements and how they can comply with the ILRP requirements where they have multiple crops with multiple nitrogen/irrigation treatments on the same parcel involving multiple crops for research purpose.

On February 25, 2015, Regional Water Board staff held a meeting with the Coalition and their Consultants in Los Banos to discuss the Groundwater Quality Assessment Report. The Consultants presented a draft report and issues with report were discussed. The Coalition was able to clarify some of the rationale used in development of the GAR, which will aid Regional Water Board staff in reviewing the report. The GAR is due to the Board by March 17, 2015.

On March 4, 2015, Regional Water Board staff participated in a grower outreach meeting held in Newman. The new Nitrogen Management Plan requirements were discussed along with the vulnerability designation where nitrates are a greater concern in groundwater.

On March 16, 2015, the Coalition submitted the GAR and SDEAR to the Central Valley Water Board.

#### *Buena Vista Coalition*

On March 6 and 11, 2015, conference calls were held with the Buena Vista Coalition to discuss the Groundwater Quality Assessment Report development and recent groundwater monitoring data that had been submitted by the Coalition.

#### *Cawelo Water District Coalition*

On January 28, 2015, Regional Water Board staff met with the Cawelo Water District Coalition to discuss the preparation of a revised Surface Water Monitoring Plan (SWMP) which is required by March 2, 2015. Discussions were also held regarding further development of the Groundwater Quality Assessment Report.

#### *Kaweah Basin Water Quality Association*

On February 25, 2015 Regional Water Board staff met with the Kaweah Basin Water Quality Association to discuss the preparation of a revised Surface Water Monitoring Plan (SWMP) which is required by March 2, 2015. After the meeting, staff visited each of the Coalition's surface water monitoring sites, accompanied by Coalition

representative Donald Ikemiya and technical consultant Matt Klinchuch. The meeting brought clarification on several items required in the Revised SWMP and Regional Water Board staff gained a better understanding of each of the surface water monitoring sites.

#### *Kern River Watershed Coalition Authority*

On February 9, 2015, Regional Water Board staff held a conference call with the Kern River Watershed Coalition Authority to discuss the Groundwater Quality Assessment Report (GAR) submitted on February 4, 2015. The Coalition was able to clarify some of the rationale used in development of the GAR, which will aid staff in reviewing the report.

#### *Kings River Watershed Coalition Authority*

On January 8, 2015, a review of the Surface Water Monitoring Plan (SWMP) submitted by the Kings River Watershed Coalition Authority was provided to the coalition. The review requires changes to the SWMP before it can be deemed complete. A revised submittal was required by March 6, 2015.

On January 28, 2015, Regional Water Board staff met with the Kings River Watershed Coalition Authority to tour the water distribution network within the coalition area. Locations included current and proposed monitoring site locations. The tour supplemented discussion regarding the preparation of a revised Surface Water Monitoring Plan.

#### *Westlands Water Quality Coalition*

On January 9, 2015 Regional Water Board staff met with representatives of Westlands Water Quality Coalition to discuss the methodology used to determine the areas of high vulnerability which will be included in the Groundwater Quality Assessment Report.

#### *Westside Water Quality Coalition*

On March 6 and 13, 2015, conference calls were held with the Westside Water Quality Coalition to discuss the Groundwater Quality Assessment Report development, and rationale used to determine areas of high vulnerability.

#### **Data Management:**

In March 2015, Regional Water Board staff received the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition's third quarterly sampling data to be reviewed by staff before loading the data into CEDEN.

Regional Water Board staff is currently processing the Westside San Joaquin Watershed Coalition data and Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition data. Delays have been recognized due to Regional Water Board staff transitions. Once complete, these sets will complement the existing data on CEDEN providing all the data submitted by the Coalition since program inception. The current goal is to complete and load to CEDEN by end of May 2015.

**Rice Pesticides Program:**

The draft report for the 2014 Rice Pesticides Program (RPP) was received on December 17, 2014. The draft report was sent to the RPP stakeholders for comment. One comment was received on the report requesting a correction on a table. On January 20, 2015, the California Rice Commission submitted the 2014 RPP monitoring results to the Executive Officer with recommendations for the 2015 season.

**Pesticide Evaluation Advisory Workgroup:**

The Waste Discharge Requirements for irrigated lands include requirements to monitor pesticides in surface water, which are to be identified as part of a process developed by Regional Water Board staff with input from qualified scientists and in coordination with the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR). A Pesticide Evaluation Advisory Workgroup was formed, and meetings were held on July 9, August 5, September 25, October 16, December 16, 2014 and January 27, 2015. Central Valley Water Board staff drafted the initial *Pesticide Evaluation Protocol* based largely on the products and discussions of the Advisory Workgroup. The draft document was presented to the workgroup on February 26, 2015 for review and comment. The final process will be issued by the Executive Officer. [Additional Workgroup information](#) is available on the Region 5 website.

**Prop 84 Grant Funding:**

A total of 79 management practice projects were completed, affecting 7,200 acres of California cropland in six counties: Contra Cost, Fresno, Merced, San Joaquin, Solano, and Stanislaus. All but one of the projects involved fields irrigated by flood/furrow irrigation that converted to micro-irrigation systems (drip or micro-sprinkler).

The final report for the project has been submitted and is being reviewed for completeness.

The [CURES website](#) has additional information on the Prop 84 funding and photos of completed projects.